



January 07, 2011

## **IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT - UPDATED**

Effective January 1, 2011, all escort vehicle operators will be required to obtain an approved certification prior to performing the duties of an oversize/overweight load escort vehicle operator in Georgia. In order to allow time for all escort vehicle drivers to meet program requirements and attend training classes, full enforcement will begin on July 1, 2011.

The Georgia Department of Transportation will administer the Oversize/Overweight Load Escort Vehicle Operator Certification Program. Any operator authorized to escort a permitted oversize/overweight load in Georgia shall make application to GDOT and meet the following requirements:

1. Is at least 21 years of age; or  
Is at least 18 years of age with a Class A commercial driver's license; or  
Is at least 18 years of age, has been employed as an escort driver for at least one year, and is sponsored by his/her employer for entry into the certification program and completes all certification requirements prior to July 1, 2011; and
2. Possesses a valid driver's license without restrictions other than for use of corrective lens and has demonstrated evidence of operating a motor vehicle safely which includes not operating in a reckless manner or driving while impaired in the previous 12 months; and
3. Possesses documentation of completion of a defensive driving course approved by the National Safety Council or an equivalent course.

Each qualified applicant will be required to complete eight classroom hours of Georgia Department of Transportation Oversize/Overweight Permit Unit's Escort Vehicle Operator Certification Program offered by the Georgia Technical College System with an examination score of at least 80% to obtain the official certification of the State.

The certification shall be effective for four years from the issue date with an anticipated cost of the course set at \$79. Upon satisfactory completion of the course, the Georgia Department of Transportation, at no fee, will issue a certificate to each individual comprised of a wallet card to be maintained in the escort vehicle during operation.

**Georgia Department of Transportation will recognize escort vehicle operator certifications from other states whose programs meet or exceed the objectives of the Georgia program for operators that currently have a valid out-of-state driver's license and certification. Please see the web site for an updated list of other state's approved programs.**

Operators with an out-of-state driver's license without a valid certification, or in states where Georgia does not recognize the program, and all operators with a Georgia driver's license, will be required to obtain a certification from the state of Georgia. All escort vehicle operator certifications and a valid driver's license is required to be available in the escort vehicle for inspection whenever the operator is performing the role of escort. Failure to conform to escort vehicle operator requirements shall result in penalties imposed under the Georgia Annotated Title 32 Highways, Bridges and Ferries.

A certification shall be revoked during its effective period for the following:

1. Failure to maintain a valid driver's license without restrictions other than for corrective lens;
2. Failure to operate a motor vehicle safely. Conviction of operating in a reckless manner or driving while impaired shall constitute prima facie evidence of not operating a motor vehicle in a safe manner; or
3. Evidence of performing the duties of an escort driver in a manner with the potential to cause an accident, personal injury, or damage to property.

If a certification is revoked, subsequent certification as an escort vehicle operator shall require reapplication, satisfaction of program prerequisites, and requalification through the certification program. An individual who has had his or her certification revoked may, within 15 days following the notification of the adverse action, make written appeal to the Administrator of the Oversize Permit Unit for review of the revocation. The Administrator may affirm or set aside the revocation based on a review of the written appeal, the revocation decision, as well as any available documents, exhibits or other evidence bearing on the appeal. The individual appealing will be advised of the final disposition of the action within 21 days following receipt of the appeal.

Enclosed is an application to participate in the Georgia Oversize Escort Vehicle Operator Certification Program. This completed application, a copy of the operator's certified driving record and documentation of completion of a defensive driving course approved by the National Safety Council or an equivalent course should be returned to:

Georgia Department of Transportation  
Oversize Permit Unit  
Attn: Certified Escort Vehicle Program  
P.O. Box 17937  
Atlanta, Georgia 30316

Once required materials are returned to the Oversize Permit Unit, individuals that meet the prerequisites of the program may contact the Georgia Technical College System location closest to them to enroll in the course.

Please make application for this program immediately to ensure you have proper credentialing and are ready for training to enroll in the initial classes starting the second week of January, 2011. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Georgia Department of Transportation, Oversize Permit Unit at 1-888-262-8306.